

Consciousness in Yoga Philosophy

--from Mary Scott, 3 Castle Court, River Park, Marlborough, Wilts SN8 1XG

I was interested to read Mick Burley's article on consciousness in yoga philosophy (December 1977). Approaching the subject from the Tantric angle on man and the universe I too discovered how much more adequately yoga philosophy can explain paranormal and mystical states and the whole range of psychic phenomena from telepathy and telekinesis to near death experiences. Unlike in Western reductionist science there is no need to agonize over the mind-body relation or to postulate 'meta' branches of science. In the course of researching for kundalini in the Physical World, the discovery of the integrative nature of yogic thought was highly exciting. It not only provided a most satisfactory framework of ideas, but kept reality in one piece by retaining the coherence of knowledge and experience as they are actually interwoven in real life.

I would, however, differ from Mick's identification of the 'I' with the *purusa* and thus the Self with consciousness. Throughout the yogic cosmos, once there is manifestation, there is a partnership between consciousness and form however tenuous forms may be at spiritual levels. Shiva and Shakti, *purusa* and

prakrti can be separated conceptually into I and Other, the witness *purusa* and the *prakrti* witnessed. The I in me, however, is an embodied consciousness witnessing other embodied consciousnesses. Consciousness can be thought of as the awareness aspect of the creation, but there must also always be the forms of which it is aware. The Shaktis are the form builders, which is why the goddesses play such important roles in the Hindu pantheon. Raising consciousness to higher levels is thus not a feat we can accomplish while in the body unless kundalini Shakti, form-builder in the physical world, supports our efforts with a host of chemical changes in the brain and endocrine system. Kundalini forces must also provide physical anchorage mechanisms to facilitate return to the body during periods when consciousness appears to be acting independently as in astral travelling and near death experiences.

Studies of consciousness which attempt to treat it as a variable that can be analysed separately may be doomed to failure. It may only be open to study in terms of the forms with which it is associated, the different ways in which we can be aware.

See Members' Articles section for Mary's article 'Kundalini: Is It Real?'

Language and Obfuscation

--from Prof Chris Clarke, 6 Blenheim Ave., Southampton.SO17 1DU

At times in the SMN I realize, often belatedly, that we can abuse language in order to play power-games. The rules of the game, which is almost universal outside the SMN, are illustrated by an interchange at a recent Mind and Brain conference. I, as first player - this role is usually taken by male physicists - present a 'popular' explanation of my work and insert into the jovial and accessible text a few totally inscrutable terms in order to make it clear that I am a Scientist and therefore privy to secrets that are inaccessible to ordinary mortals. The context makes it clear that these terms are so technical that no untrained person could possibly understand them. I am later accosted by player number two who in this case perceptively chose the (now often neglected) Dumb Blonde Gambit: she exposes my action by stating that she never understands anything to do with mathematics while

launching a simultaneous flanking attack on my feminist principles by declaring that she always leaves that sort of thing to her husband. A cruder response for player two is the Me Too Gambit, of composing an even more jokey and accessible text in which the same technical terms are repeatedly used all over the place to underline the fact that they are also privy to these same secrets. On either pattern of play, communication is replaced by obfuscation.

I was reminded of the Dumb Blonde Gambit in an article in the last Network where the author, who shall remain anonymous, described a conference reference to 'work done in Russia on torsion fields which though too technical for most of us...'. Surely, Julian, you could have plied the speaker with vodkas at the bar until he softened up enough to explain to you what he was talking about? As it happens, I did my Ph.D under Dennis Sciama who was the author (with Kibble) of the most successful torsion field theory, an experience which for a long time caused me to include questions on torsion fields in all my exams, which my colleagues always deleted as being obscure and unfair. Having looked at some of the Russian papers (there may be others that are more authentic) I have the distinct impression that they are examples of the Me Too Gambit, and that there is no evidence whatever that the effects that are being detected are in fact caused by torsion fields.

The SMN is starting to open up these and other abuses of language with the excellent debate on the word 'Energy' over the last few issues. Let us be clear that there are many different and proper uses of language: as a shepherd to bring together ideas that would otherwise stray, or a rapier to discriminate the subtlest distinctions, or a symbol to evoke knowledge deeper than rational thought. But could we all form a late new year's resolution to become aware of just how we are using it, so as to avoid sinking into an indiscriminate mire in which fields, energies, dimensions, vibrations, auras, chaos, fractals, bosons, complexity, strings, great attractors, consciousness, grounding and enlightenment are blended with complete disregard to any of their legitimate meanings?

Healing, Chakras and the Endocrine System

--from Chris Coulson PhD, 39 King Edward Road, Barnet, Herts EN5 5AS

I read with interest Larry Dossey's article, 'Energy Talk', in the April issue of Network. I can sympathize with the particular problem that healers encounter when trying to explain the concept of healing at a distance in energetic terms to orthodox scientists. I suspect that our civilization is hooked on the concept of kinetic energy from early days at school when we are set problems calculating the energy required for trains to travel up inclines.

Perhaps we are getting blocked by an overt emphasis on healing energy at this stage - an energy we clearly do not fully understand at present - the nature of which may become clearer as time goes on. To argue by analogy, biochemists are rarely concerned with energy in a direct way. Rather we measure signal (e.g. hormone) release from a particular organ and binding at the target organ by receptor, frequently on the cell surface. The receptor transduces the signal into an intracellular event such as enzyme or gene activation which we measure. Clearly energy does play a part in this overall process, but indirectly. I suggest that if we switch the emphasis of the discussion to one of signal transmission and reception/transduction, we may advance our understanding of this healing process - Era III?

The nature of the signal receiver is intriguing. There is no obvious receiver in the healee's physical body. If we look beyond the physical, however, we may explore a more esoteric

model involving the existence of more subtle bodies. The etheric body, for example, contains an integrated system of features that might be suitable candidates for receivers, namely the seven major chakras. These wheels or vortices can exist in one of three states: a. receiving from the environment b. giving out to the environment c. closed.

Clearly in the first state the recipient would be sensitive to healing but not in the second or third. An alternation between states according to circumstances would seem to be the most appropriate condition for health. A chakra permanently closed, or open but giving out, could be regarded as dysfunctional and may partly explain the varying effectiveness of the healing process. The chakras also have the ability to act as signal transducers by virtue of their proposed connection with the endocrine system. Although there are some variations between different authors regarding the connections of the three lower chakras, a consensus view of the correspondence between the seven major chakras and endocrine glands is shown in the table below

Root Sacral Solar plexus Heart Throat Brow Crown

Chakra	Gland
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	Gonads
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	Spleen
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	Adrenals
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	Thymus
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	Thyroid/parathyroid
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	Pituitary
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	Pineal
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How may the endocrine system act as a mediator in the healing process? The emphasis in classical medicine has been to isolate a particular diseased organ and treat it as an entity separate from the whole. On the other hand, the endocrine system is classically regarded as an integrated system maintaining homeostasis or balance in the organism.

Is it possible that homeostasis may have been upset by the disease process or, alternatively, that the balance was initially upset in the etheric body which eventually caused disease in the physical body? In either case, correction of this imbalance by stimulation and/or rebalancing of one or more chakras could then be part of the healing mechanism.

Some of the most obvious disease processes arise from dysfunction in the immune system as, for example, infection, auto-immunity and immune compromised conditions such as AIDS and cancer. The endocrine and immune systems are closely interlinked in many ways through hormones and neurotransmitters. Perhaps the most important connection is through the thymus gland which controls the maturation of T-cells, the major effector cells of the immune system, and the identification of self and not self - an activity that continues

throughout life. On this view, a poorly functioning heart chakra may therefore give rise, not only to the obvious connection of heart problems, but also to a malfunctioning immune system.

On this basis the transmitter might also be in the etheric body to allow smooth function through a planet-wide etheric web, or etheric Internet, in which we may be all enmeshed. A concentrated healing thought could be directed from the brow chakra. Another alternative is the throat chakra which is reputed to be the chakra connected with clairaudience.

I hope that a signal reception approach may be more constructive than energy talk and may suggest experiments, perhaps involving scientists and healers, that can give us greater understanding of the healing process. I believe the need to find such a framework that can integrate medical science, healing and other processes such as ESP is a crucial activity for our time.

Are Philosophers Competent Experimenters?

--from Dr Alexander Imich, 305 West End Avenue, New York NY10023, USA

Philosophy professor, Stephen E. Braude, in a letter published in the April 1997 issue of Network, criticizes my report of experiments with Joe Nuzum and tries to debunk his performance. He accuses me of omitting 'a great deal of important background information about the subject, as well as crucial details about the experiment'. It is true that Joe knows magical tricks. I did not mention this, as well as the fact that Joe is also a master and teacher of martial arts, because none of these two capacities can explain the events observed at that evening.

The main event was the spinning of a dollar bill suspended on a hairpin and covered with an inverted glass aquarium tank, tightly taped to the table. Blowing and fanning air by Braude and myself, before the beginning and after the experiment, could not generate movement of the bill. Yet, when Nuzum acted on it, the bill started spinning in one, and few seconds later in the opposite direction.

Sometime after the session, Braude told me that magicians use special equipment which permits to spin a paper strip poised on a pin. To use this equipment the subject either should be sitting on a chair and keeping his foot on the box containing the apparatus, or standing on this box, or on a metal tape connected with the apparatus. The equipment has to be grounded. Nuzum was not sitting on a chair, nor was he standing on a box or a metal tape. He stood on the floor and there was simply no trace of any special equipment, of metal tape or grounding wire. There might be dozens ways to produce the same effect. There is in my report no mention of such special equipment because I was reporting about what really happened that evening, and not writing a treatise about the existing methods of spinning a paper strip. In addition to all the above, there remains a serious question whether the equipment imagined by Braude would be able to spin the dollar bill covered by an upturned glass aquarium tank. I also did not mention that Nuzum was retreating to his hotel bedroom before causing the dollar bill to spin, because whatever he could have done in this bedroom could not explain the event as it did happen.

Braude questions also the paranormal character of Nuzum's spoon bending. He writes that the video technician analysing the videotape of this event discovered that Nuzum's finger slid down the handle of the spoon to its bowl 'at which position the spoon can be bent by

force'. Referring to the title of my letter I have to conclude that Braude never tried to bend a stainless steel tablespoon, or even a teaspoon, with the thumb of the same hand that is holding the spoon. Because if he did, he would know how hopeless is the trial to debunk the paranormality of such event.

Despite of all he has written, at the end of his article Braude states that Nuzum might be a genuine psychic. He then accuses him of cheating. On what grounds? Not on the ground of observed facts, but on the ground of his imagination only. He also decides that Nuzum may not be worth of research effort. A surprising statement by the author of a book describing, among others, Eusapia Palladino, the great medium who, although caught cheating many times, was nevertheless intensively studied by the leading parapsychologists of that time. Since psychics capable of producing macro-PK phenomena are these days so extremely rare, discouraging their study by a proponent of macro-PK research is hard to understand, and also harmful for the progress of our science. My latest report about Nuzum and laser phenomena is in print.

Mr Payne's Multitude of Errors

--from Emeritus Professor Gerhard D Wasserman, 21 Oakhurst Drive, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 4JS

Max Payne's review of my book *A Philosophy of Matter and Mind* (Network, August 1997, p. 55) is crowded with serious errors. Whereas I reject Popper's neo-Cartesian interaction dualism and particularly Popper's attack on epiphenomenalism (which contains a mistake, see Wassermann, 1979, 'Reply to Popper's Attack on Epiphenomenalism', *Mind* 88 572-75) Payne believes that Popper's metaphysics must be accepted to invalidate my philosophy of mind. There is no need for this since I reject Popper's metaphysics (p. 148). My remarks about 'shadow matter' are totally ignored by Payne and with it my epiphenomenalism. I wrote (p. 23) '... for all we know it could be the "shadow matter brain" which is the carrier of mentality and the seat of consciousness ... and not the ordinary matter brain'. In my theory thoughts belong to a material shadow matter brain and not to a Popperian non-material world. Thoughts are epiphenomena of the actions of the 'shadow matter brain'. I did not mention parapsychology since I have provided a fairly comprehensive mechanistic materialistic theory of paranormal phenomena in my earlier book *Shadow Matter and Psychic Phenomena* (Oxford, Mandrake of Oxford, 1993)(reviewed in *Network* by David Lorimer). The latter book supplements that reviewed by Mr Payne and, together with it, forms a mechanistic materialistic theory that spans normal and paranormal phenomena. People would do better to read my book rather than rely on Payne's error-studded and misleading review.

-a reply from Max Payne

Of course anyone who wants to know whether Wassermann refutes Popper, or Popper refutes Wassermann should consult the original literature and not rely on a review typed on one sheet of A4. I never thought readers of *Network* would think otherwise. However there remains the problem with Prof. Wassermann's book which the review raises, but he does not answer. His scientific system models are constructs of consciousness. Therefore reducing consciousness to them is a merely circular argument and gives us no insight into what consciousness actually *is*.

Bohm, Particles and Information

--from david Boston, Marina, Golf Links Rd. Westward Ho! Bideford, Devon, EX39 1HH

In *Network 65* Prof Waltraud Wagner drew attention to confusion between information and energy in the talk of some healers and others, so that the word energy is sometimes used, when it may be only information that is involved. She also explained the difference between information and energy. This parallels Bohm's version of quantum mechanics where a particle, such as an electron, is controlled by the information in the quantum field and independently of the energy. Bohm further suggests that if the resultant action of the particle requires energy, this could be obtained in other ways. He also points out that the effect does not necessarily fall off with distance. If this concept could be extended to include the idea that ESP or psi information might also influence particles, then this might help to provide a realist explanation of some phenomena, especially cases where a quantity of energy may be involved, as in psychokinesis and poltergeist effects since the energy would not have to be supplied by the psi information.

As an example of the increased recognition of ESP etc. *The New Scientist* recently publicized Sheldrake's 'Are you looking at me' experiment and even supplied DIY kits. It stated that Sheldrake 'believes that the act of looking generates a field that the subject can detect'. Note Sheldrake's use of the term 'field' rather than 'energy'.

It must be conceded that Bohm's hypothesis for a particle controlled by information as he says:- 'equivalent to a ship on automatic pilot' seems incredible. But if it could be shown that the same principle applied to ESP phenomena, it would add support to his model for those who believe in the reality of the ESP phenomena. For non-scientists it should be explained that the conventional image of an electron is of a fundamental particle of no known size or structure.

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